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Centre caring 'on the move' Page 7

RAF Odiham put through paces Page 10

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Thursday, November 28 - Wednesday, December 4, 2013 Advertising/Newsdesk: 01235 511700 www.basingstokeobserver.co.uk

SHE IS A TRUE PROFESSIONAL

· Alanah Donnell won the Professional of the Year award, and (inset) Prime Minister David Cameron speaking at the ceremony (Pictures courtesy of the Cabinet Office)

Woman sees off hundreds for government honour

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

AN ODIHAM civil servant has fought off hundreds of competitors to be crowned 'Professional of the Year' at a special ceremony in London.

Alanah Donnell was rewarded for her role as head of strategic engagement at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

She was nominated after "[developing] a reputation as a trusted, credible adviser".

The nomination added: "She is often sought out by ministers and special advisers about work outside her remit.

"She strives to develop herself and others, celebrating success and highlighting the tangible impact their work has on public opinion.

"Her leadership is felt in successful campaign delivery, her team's high performance and their personal development."

Alanah was presented with her award at the ceremony at Lancaster House, attended by Prime Minister David Cameron.

She has worked in the civil service for 10 years, in three different departments.

On her win, Alanah said: "It was flattering and exciting just to be nominated for this award, but to have won is incredible.

"To win means an awful lot, and to be recognised as a leader out of this incredible sector is humbling.

"Although it's an individual nomination, I couldn't have done this without the support of a great team.

"I'm really proud to be representing communications at this level, and it's fantastic to see communications being recognised as the professional discipline it is."

In his address, the Prime Minister praised the role of the Civil Service in modern government.

"It's only when you become Prime Minister that you really grasp the enormity of what the Civil Service does," he said.

"And as the leader of a coalition government, I am especially grateful for what you do."

Sir Bob Kerslake, head of the Civil Service, added: "In spite of the tough financial situation, civil servants across departments are rising to the challenge and making a difference – whether in the area of policy or delivery, be it promoting growth or improving our record on diversity, there is so much to be proud of and to celebrate.

"The awards ceremony showcased the commitment, innovation and dedication of colleagues that exists in abundance across the organisation, and I only wish I had the space here to congratulate all the winners individually."

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Drivers warned of roadside cons

POLICE are warning motorists to be aware after a woman was conned into handing over cash at the roadside.

The incident occurred at about 10am last Friday on the slip road for the M3 at junction five for Hook.

The victim was joining the motorway when she was flagged down by a man with a white van.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

He told the victim that he needed money for his family and offered her a gold ring in exchange for money.

The victim did not want the ring so the man took back the ring and also kept the money.

Similar incidents have previously occurred elsewhere in Hampshire.

Chief Inspector Annabel Berry, responsible for policing in Hart and Rushmoor, said: "It seems the offenders for these scams prey on the good nature of their victims.

"Those that offer gold in exchange for cash are often selling highly polished copper made to look like gold which is practically worthless.

"Tackling and disrupting organised crime is a priority for the force and it's believed that the offenders are involved in such groups operating across the country.

"I hope the actions of these few criminals do not dissuade people from offering help at the side of the road to others who genuinely need it."

A police statement added if people spot anyone acting suspiciously in this way at the roadside, get in touch with them immediately and, if possible, take down the registration number of the vehicle.

People should also, added the statement, not be afraid to refuse help if they are suspicious of any behaviour. Anyone with information about roadside scams should contact police on 101 or 999 if you suspect a crime is in progress.

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Cops appeal for help after man is hurt

A 50-year-old man was left with several broken bones and needing surgery after he was hit by a car in Basingstoke.

The man was crossing Worting Road near the Airkix skydiving centre at West Ham Roundabout on November 13.

The car in question reportedly drove through the red light and collided with the man.

The driver stopped briefly, but drove off, without checking on the man's welfare.

The victim required surgery on his ankle, which needed to be reconstructed.

It is understood the car is a dark-coloured Renault Clio, with a P or L registration.

PC Steve Morrison said: "This happened at a busy time of day so there may have been people around or other drivers who saw what happened.

"If you saw this incident and have any information which may help my investigation, please contact me."

Call PC Morrison on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 if you have any information.

Go-kart stolen from family's garden

AN EIGHT-year-old boy has had his go-kart stolen by thieves in Basingstoke.

The toy vehicle was stolen from the back garden of the family's house in Constantine Way between November 7 and 9.

PC Richard Harrison said: "If you know where this go-kart is or know who is responsible for stealing it, please contact me."

The parents are eager to get the kart back for their son before Christmas.

The Kettler go-kart is easily identifiable by the owners, and police are especially keen to hear from anybody who might have been offered it as a sale.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact PC Harrison at Basingstoke Police Station on 101 or call the charity Crimestoppers line on 0800 555 111, where information can be left anonymously.

· The go-kart was stolen from the house in Constantine Way earlier this month (Picture courtesy of Hampshire Constabulary)

Do you have a story to share with our readers?
Contact the Newsdesk on
01235 516930
or email **news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk**

Santa Parade is set to kick off town's festivities in style

FESTIVAL Place will be awash with Christmas magic this weekend as the Santa Parade comes to town.

The annual event begins at 12noon from Clifton Slope as part of the venue's Christmas scheduling.

Centre director Steven Connolly said: "The Santa Parade is one of the highlights of the season, it's always a huge hit with children and helps get everyone into the Christmas spirit. We are looking forward to welcoming shoppers to see the parade and join in the fun with us and Santa!"

Throughout December, the centre will also have Santa's Grotto, open every day, which comes with a train ride and an early Christmas present.

Live music will be performed each Wednesday throughout the month, while gingerbread workshops will give families the chance to make their own gingerbread men, or even create the ideal gingerbread house on the upper level of the centre.

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Vicky has no regrets about career change

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

• Vicky Ferguson is now a full-time employee of Glad's House

A BASINGSTOKE woman has spoken of her full-circle journey with a children's charity she helped set up in Africa.

Vicky Ferguson gave up her dream of being an actress to focus on forming Glad's House – an organisation dedicated to helping children on the streets.

The charity works to reunite families, help children into foster care, place children in full time education and engage with children and youths through sport and enterprise schemes.

Vicky had won a place at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), after studying at her local theatre school, Stagecoach Basingstoke, before deciding to take a gap year and travel.

"It was at the end of the trip that I reached Kenya and saw first-hand the poverty and homelessness in Mombasa," said Vicky.

"It was then that I knew I wanted to make a difference rather than my original goal of becoming an actor.

"I made a real connection with the staff and volunteers working in the city and after many inspiring discussions we decided to set up our own charity."

She set up Glad's House in 2006, along with her parents Cliff (charity chairman) and Jan (secretary), and the charity's UK base is in Hook.

And the charity's growth has seen Vicky recently return as the organisation's development director in the UK and Kenya.

Vicky spent five years with Stagecoach, who have already donated 200 T-shirts and shoes for the children.

They will make more donations in the coming months.

Lynn Howes, from Stagecoach, said: "I was absolutely delighted to hear that Vicky had taken up a full-time position within the charity.

"Glad's House is an important charity that helps drastically improve the lives of many children in Kenya and we are very happy to support her with donations."

Vicky added: "I was delighted when Lynn got in touch to offer help. Stagecoach has been a massive part of my life and helped me get to where I am now, while I decided against becoming an actor, the skills I developed at Stagecoach have been vital.

"Every day I have to communicate some of the most harrowing stories about poverty and homelessness to people in a way that engages them, and that story telling ability is a product of Stagecoach training."

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Cops will take to the trains to raise awareness

HAMPSHIRE Police is planning to run an operation next week to inform commuters on trains with crime prevention advice.

It will also be an opportunity for people to meet the police.

Officers often find it difficult to reach busy commuters with important messages but hope that by boarding trains they can catch people when they have a moment to spare.

The routes that will be covered are Alton to Winchester, Winchester to Waterloo, Basingstoke to Waterloo and Ash to Reading.

Officers will have an opportunity to remind commuters ahead of Christmas about crime prevention tips and will also be able to offer assistance to register their valuable gadgets on immobilise.com.

Exact days are likely to be finalised later this week but it is likely that officers will be out in force during morning rush hour on December 2.

Other possible dates are evening rush hour on either December 4 or December 6.

News Bites

Teen charged

A 16-year-old boy has been charged with arson with intent, criminal damage and possession of a class B drug.

It is in connection with a fire which broke out at a flat in Bramley shortly before 3.30am on October 12.

A 22-year-old man has already been arrested in connection with the incident and remains on police bail until December 18.

Christmas carols

A CAROLS by Candlelight event is taking place at Basingstoke's St. Michael's Church on December 12.

The evening will also include readings from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol by BBC Radio 2 presenter Johnnie Walker.

Starting at 6.30pm, the event is open to all and therefore no tickets are required.

Check your oil

PEOPLE across the county that depend on oil for their heating are being urged to make sure their central heating systems can take the extra strain as the winter weather sets in.

OFTEC, the trade body for the oil-fired heating industry, says householders should check their boilers are in good running order and the oil tank is sufficiently full in preparation for the Christmas and New Year period.

Malcolm Farrow, of OFTEC, said: "It's important that no one gets caught out this winter, especially older people and anyone more susceptible to the cold."

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Last chance saloon for care home group

A COUNCIL committee has endorsed recommendations to close the Deeside Care Home in Basingstoke.

Two other care homes in Hampshire – Bulmer House in Petersfield and Nightingale Lodge in Romsey – face impending closure after the Safe and Healthy People Select Committee meeting in Winchester last week.

However, HCC's director of Adult Services, Gill Duncan, recommended that a fourth care home, Cranleigh Paddock in Lyndhurst, stays open.

A final decision will be made at the Hampshire County Council cabinet meeting on December 9.

Chairman of the Select Committee, Cllr Patricia Stallard, said: "The scrutiny meeting allowed a full and frank debate on the overall proposals put forward by the Director of Adult Services and the detailed recommendations in relation to each of the homes.

"I am very grateful to the members of the committee for their contribution to the debate and to the members of the public who made deputations at the meeting.

"The latter's contribution to the committee's understanding of the issues and feelings of those involved with the homes was invaluable."

The proposal to close these three homes is associated with a £45m investment plan for new Extra Care assisted living as well as enlargement of the Oakridge residential home in Basingstoke with purpose designed, specialist accommodation for people with dementia.

It is a fresh blow to campaigners, who have one last chance to present their case at the meeting.

A group set up on Facebook dedicated to saving the care home has attracted 357 likes at time of print.

Anyone wishing to make a case for Deeside to stay open should visit the county council website, or contact Democratic and Member Support on 01962 845751 or members.services@hants.gov.uk.

Any application to make a deputation must be made no less than three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

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Celebration of region's Interfaith Calendar

THIRTY children from across Hampshire helped launch the county's 2014 Interfaith Calendar last week.

The youngsters, from infant, primary and secondary schools around the county, picked up their prizes for their winning designs in the calendar in a competition coordinated by the Hampshire Interfaith Network (HIN) and the county council.

Each winning calendar design relates to one of over a hundred religious festivals featured in the calendar from the nine faith groups represented.

Hampshire County Council chairman, Councillor Ken Thornber, CBE welcomed guests to the seventh annual Hampshire Interfaith Lecture, presented by guest speaker, Dr Moojan Momen, fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Councillor Andrew Joy, co-chairman of the Hampshire Interfaith Network and Hampshire County Council's executive member for Communities and Partnerships, said: "I would like to congratulate all the young artists who submitted their designs for this year's calendar competition.

"Once again, their entries were of outstanding quality.

"It has also been a huge privilege to welcome Dr Momen as our guest speaker for the annual Interfaith Lecture and I would like to thank him for his inspirational words.

"These events play a valuable role in building greater understanding between people of different faiths and cultures across the county."

Man has to have fingers reattached

A MAN had to have surgery to reattach his fingers after they were bitten off in a fight outside a Basingstoke bar.

A "number of people" were involved in the disorder, which began in the beer garden and car park of the Poison Bar.

The fight continued onto Churchill Way, Alencon Link and near the Eastrop Roundabout.

A 19-year-old Basingstoke man and a London man, 27, were arrested as part of inquiries into the assault on the 48-year-old victim.

They have been bailed until December 13.

Detective Constable Tracy West said: "This was a serious incident where a man sustained a nasty injury.

"There were a number of people involved in this incident and fights spilled out into the road. Drivers would have had to swerve to miss these people and may have seen what was going on.

"Many people have already come forward, but I would like to urge anyone who saw anything and hasn't already spoken to an officer, to get in touch."

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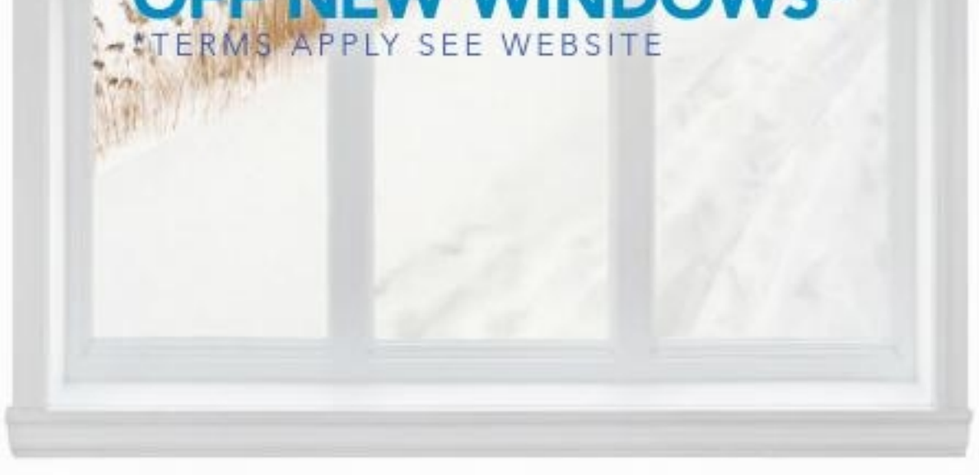

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Fastfit offers everything from MOTs and minor servicing to major repairs and complex engine work.

More complex issues include an Engine Control Unit (ECU) remapping service which makes the vehicle more responsive and smoother to driver. In these tough time, it also slightly increases the miles-per-gallon!

Fastfit Service Centre also stocks a rang of budget or performance tyres and it can also custom build stainless steel exhaust systems.

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Centre caring 'on the move'

• Staff at Bluebird Care can now monitor their patients without unnecessary paperwork

A HOOK-based care home has become the first in the region to give its workers a mobile programme that helps them keep track of patients' welfare.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Sixty staff at Bluebird Care are using the iConnect from Advanced Health and Care, which delivers real-time updates and schedules to workers regarding their patients.

Bosses say the move has reduced paperwork, phone costs, printing and postage costs, thus making for more efficient care.

Phil Miles, managing director of Bluebird, said, "The use of iConnect has made us more efficient and provided us with greater transparency around care delivery.

"We know exactly when our care workers arrive and leave customers' homes and there is no longer a reliance on paper rosters and follow-up phone calls between the office and care workers when appointments need rearranging."

The centre, which has been in operation since June 2012, has been using the system since September.

Fellow MD John Prendergast added: "The benefit of improved visibility around care worker visits has been invaluable.

"If care workers are running late, for example, customers and their families are notified in a timely fashion, providing reassurance.

"It is also much easier for us to rearrange care workers' appointments whilst they are out and about, accommodating last minute changes.

"In addition, the stress surrounding asking a customer to sign a proof of attendance document has been eliminated.

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Sex assault man hunted by cops after incident in hotel

DETECTIVES are hunting a man after a 32-year-old woman was sexually assaulted in a Basingstoke hotel.

The victim suffered the attack between 9pm and 11pm on November 12 at the Apollo Hotel in Popley Way.

The man police wish to speak to is white, in his late 30s, balding and had a wrinkled face with blue eyes.

He is said to have a Polish accent, and had a tattoo on his lower back.

He was wearing blue jeans and brown work boots.

Police have released a CCTV image in relation to the assault, and are appealing for anybody with information to come forward.

"Detective Constable Simon Quickfall said: "This incident happened in a room at the hotel, but someone may have seen the man outside the hotel.

"I appreciate that the image isn't very clear, but if you know who this man is, please contact me."

News Bites

Seen this man?

• This man is wanted in connection with an attempted burglary in Basingstoke

POLICE have released an image of a man they want to speak to after an attempted burglary in Basingstoke.

The man was inside a house in Lily Close, before he was disturbed by a 16-year-old boy.

The offender then fled the scene, nothing was stolen.

PC Mark Pullman said: "If you know who this man might be, please contact me."

Helping the aged

HAMPSHIRE County Council are seeking residents' views on how to help older people in the borough maintain their independence.

Consultations are currently open on the 'Ageing Well in Hampshire' strategy – which will look to address key issues facing some older people as they fight to live in their own homes.

The consultation, open until December 2, is part of the council's Health and Wellbeing strategy, which includes the Better Balance for Life project, which provides older people with exercise ideas and classes to improve their balance and prevent falls.

'Stoke's businesses win big at Inspire awards...

THE winners of the Inspire North Hampshire Business Awards were announced at a gala dinner at Hampshire Court Hotel, Basingstoke on Thursday evening.

Winners from across the area were honoured and nearly 650 guests from around the region attended.

The awards are organised by Destination Basingstoke on behalf of sponsors and partners from across the northern part of the county.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Guests enjoyed a spectacular light show, and a three course dinner.

The awards were hosted by Felicity Edwards from Destination Basingstoke on the indoor tennis courts at Hampshire Court Hotel which, were transformed or the evening into a sumptuous and glamorous dinner venue.

"It is a huge honour to manage these awards, and we are so pleased that the event has attracted such support," said Felicity.

"Nearly 650 people sitting down to dinner is a fantastic achievement for INSPIRE, and also testament to the fact that north Hampshire is home to some phenomenally successful businesses who want to celebrate their achievements."

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List of Inspire Business Awards categories and winners

Business of the Year: Temporary Cover, Fleet
Innovation of Year: J & J Carter, Andover
Young Business Person of the Year: Simon Hood, HCR, Basingstoke
Business and the Community: Taylor's Hair and Beauty, Basingstoke
New Business of the Year: MiMi (hw), Hartley Wintney
Sustainable Business of the Year: Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT)
Exporter of the Year: De La Rue, Basingstoke
Small Business of the Year: The Bar Code Network
Marketing Campaign of the Year: The Purple Agency, Basingstoke
Service Excellence Award: Adsyst Automation, Yateley
Employee of the Year: Tom Ford, Vitacress, St Mary Bourne
Employer of the Year: Be Wiser Insurance, Andover

Joy for junior engineer Ash

· Ash Thorne Andersen

A BASINGSTOKE engineer is doubly delighted after picking up two prestigious awards.

Ash Thorne Andersen was named Apprentice of the Year, and also scooped the prize for Outstanding Academic Achievement at Southampton City College.

Ash is a trainee technician at the Basingstoke office of professional consultancy WSP, structural engineers on the Shard in London.

He has completed his apprenticeship and has now moved on to start an Higher National Diploma (HND) in Civil Engineering.

Once this is complete he intends to continue onto a full degree.

Ash said: "Working as an apprentice for WSP has offered me a unique and exciting path for my career and education.

"My team in particular have consistently provided me with many new and diverse challenges to develop my technical skills and knowledge."

Ash's line manager, WSP associate director Matthew Hall said: "We are thrilled for Ash. The recognition he has received underscores the consistent positive feedback we receive from his college tutors."

Stay alert for supermarket fraud

PEOPLE in Basingstoke are being warned to be on the lookout for potential supermarket scams, after a spate of incidents across the county.

Scam artists are distracting shoppers in supermarket car parks, before stealing their cards and withdrawing money or buying expensive items.

Techniques people have been told to look out for include claiming the victim has a nail in their car tyre, asking for directions, a need to go to hospital or asking if people have dropped money.

Crime prevention advisor Graeme Barbour said: "People who have fallen victim to this type of crime have also reported seeing people behaving suspiciously in supermarkets.

"This could be where offenders are watching shoppers entering PIN codes when paying for their shopping.

"If you notice people acting suspiciously inside supermarkets or you are approached by someone in a car park, please report it to police as soon as possible.

"These people are knowingly preying on people's goodwill and helpful nature and are intentionally targeting lone shoppers at supermarkets, causing a distraction which allows another member of the group to commit the theft.

"If you are approached in this way, please act cautiously. Not everyone asking for directions is a criminal, and if you choose to help it is your decision to do so.

"However, if you do, before you help please ensure your vehicle is locked and all your valuables are on your person or locked in your vehicle out of sight."

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> Andy Smith, MD of Academy Home Improvements, says "the new branding is to enable us to promote ourselves more easily as a company that provides a wide range of quality home improvements products".

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The new Basingstoke showroom is the first to be refurbished under the company's new name. Academy Home Improvements offer a fantastic product range which includes kitchens, bedrooms, conservatories, orangeries, and doors plus double and triple-glazed windows. For more information please visit www.academyhome.co.uk or be one of the first to call into the new showroom.

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News Bites

Lottery results

ST MICHAEL'S Hospice have announced the results of their lottery draw from November 22.

First prize of £1,000 goes to ticket 85062 of Old Basing.

And Tadley ticket 60774 scoops second prize of £100.

Third prize of £50 is awarded to 20339 of Lychpit, while fourth prize of £20 goes to Bramley ticket 25682.

Sixteen consolation prizes of £5 are awarded to tickets 06720, 12641, 14202, 18007, 18367, 28949, 41322, 47064, 51097, 53512, 53724, 68219, 85247, 86699, 95164 and 95258.

Gas awareness

LOCAL authorities are urging people in Basingstoke and across Hampshire to be wary of the risks of carbon monoxide.

This week is the nationwide carbon monoxide awareness week.

It aims to reduce deaths and ill health by the gas dubbed as the "silent killer".

Cllr Roy Perry, leader of Hampshire County Council, said: "People can help protect themselves from the dangers of carbon monoxide by ensuring their appliances are properly fitted and are regularly serviced by Gas Safe engineers, among other simple steps."

Basingstoke MP Maria Miller has also lent her support to the drive to raise awareness of the "silent killer".

"It is vital that we raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning," she said."

RAF Odiham put through paces

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

CREWS from RAF Odiham teamed up with other military and emergency services from Hampshire as part of a major simulation exercise.

A Lynx military helicopter simulated crashing in Aldershot Training Area last Monday (November 18), and the Odiham team sprang into action.

The 80-man strong live scenario exercise, which started at 6pm and lasted until 2pm the following day, must be undertaken once every two years.

Teams were involved in providing the initial response to the crash, guarding the simulated wreckage, attending to casualties and preserving the scene for evidence.

• The simulated helicopter wreckage

Wing Commander Colin Sullivan, chief of staff at RAF Odiham, acted as the incident commander.

"Within minutes of the simulated emergency being called, the command headquarters at RAF Odiham was flooded with personnel from across the civil emergency services and environmental agencies," he said.

"It was extremely heartening to witness the speed at which both civilian and military personnel came together to provide a very effective, efficient and speedy response to this simulated incident.

"As with any exercise, we all learnt valuable lessons, but it was reassuring to see how well the team performed and that nothing was fundamentally broken.

"I have complete confidence that in the unlikely event of a real aircraft crash, RAF Odiham and the civil emergency services would bring the incident to a swift conclusion."

Group Captain Richard Maddison, station commander at RAF Odiham said: "As a station and a force, we take the safety of our personnel and aircraft very seriously.

"This exercise is part of our wider proactive stance of ensuring that the way we operate is flawless, and that in the highly unlikely event of something like this happening for real, our response would be tried and tested, resulting in any situation being dealt with professionally and efficiently."

An RAF Odiham statement added: "The event was a resounding success and further proof of the fantastic working relationship and synergy which is held between both the armed and emergency services."

Council in housing list overhaul

BASINGSTOKE and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) has promised to overhaul its current housing waiting list system in order to make it fairer for everyone.

A recent consultation saw over 400 residents give their views on the current system.

Changes being considered by the authority include moving to a simpler banding system, setting a maximum income threshold at £60,000 and removing applicants with no identifiable housing need.

Residents also suggested penalising applicants who behave badly or play the system and removing 'working in the area' as a qualification for joining the list.

Cabinet member for Housing and Regeneration Cllr Rob Golding said: "We have a commitment to local people and their need for local affordable housing.

"Following the consultation, we now have a chance to rethink the housing allocation system to make it more transparent and to be more honest about who we can help and who we can't, making it more streamlined for everybody."

Other potential changes include removing applicants with over £30,000 savings and requiring people to live in the area for several years before joining the list.

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Conning trio dupe woman out of jewels

THREE men conned and burgled a woman after one of them posed as a fence-repair worker.

The man knocked on the door of the house in Essex Road, Basingstoke, and told the woman he had been sent to repair storm damage to her garden fence.

She led him through to the back garden and pointed out there was none.

However, while she did this, it is believed two other men, who were seen stood on the pavement near the house, went inside and stole jewellery.

The burglary took place on November 12.

The first man is described as 40, of stocky build, with a round face and short grey hair.

One of the other men is in his 60s, thin and with short white hair, while the third man is in his early 20s, thin and with blond hair.

Detective Constable Sian Newland said: "Did you see anything unusual in Essex Road at lunchtime on November 12?

"Did you see a group of three men walking in the area or hanging around in a car? I would also like to hear from anyone who has had a man call at their door in similar circumstances."

Anyone with any information should contact police's non-emergency number 101.

Alternatively, people can get in touch with Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Residents scrap cars for other transport

HUNDREDS of people in areas of Basingstoke have reacted positively to a council appeal to using alternative methods to cars.

By James Booker
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Residents of Hatch Warren, Brighton Hill and Beggarwood took part in Hampshire County Council's 15-week 'My Journey' challenge over the summer.

Travel advisors visited over 2,500 households in the region, 42 per cent of which requested personal travel information packs, and 360 in total rising to the challenge.

Two hundred residents also took up the offer of a free, seven day Basingstoke Megarider bus taster ticket to see if their journeys could be made as easily by public transport.

'My Journey' is funded from a £4.1m grant received from the Department for Transport Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which hopes to reduce congestion at peak times, as well as carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

Hampshire County Council's executive member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Seán Woodward, said: "It is good to hear that the personal travel planning activity has been so well received by people in Basingstoke.

"Given the high price of fuel in recent times, 'My Journey' can help people find alternative ways to travel in place of taking the car, and potentially save themselves money.

"Using alternatives to the car for some journeys to work, shopping and even on the school run, can only help to reduce local congestion.

"Plus people choosing to walk or cycle instead of driving will also benefit in health terms by increasing their level of physical activity."

Ted Pritchard from Basingstoke said: "I used to drive my car from home to Brighton Hill then down Western Way to the school.

"But now I cycle the three miles which saves me the cost of fuel and also the big problem of getting through the traffic and finding somewhere to park near the school.

"On a school morning it takes me no longer as I do not encounter any traffic jams, I'm also getting fitter".

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Dig deep to sponsor a child this Christmas

BASINGSTOKE-BASED children's charity Sebastian's Action Trust is asking for kind-hearted residents to dig deep this Christmas and sponsor a child.

The charity helps children with severe life-changing conditions as well as providing support for their families.

By sponsoring a child for £60, people will be helping to share the cost of a planned Winter Wonderland-themed Christmas party. At the party, children will get to visit Father Christmas, revel in lots of festive entertainment and unwrap Christmas presents.

· Will you sponsor a child?

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If you would like your event considered for publication please contact reporter Adam Flinn at adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk or telephone 01235 516933

In the Laughterhouse

By **Adam Flinn**
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

BASINGSTOKE'S comedy club Laughterhouse is back in action this evening, with entertainment from comics Jonny Awsum and Dan Evans.

The brainchild of comedian Jan Jack, Laughterhouse has been running in the town for several years, and often attracts a mix of big names and up and coming comics to perform on stage.

It was set up by Jan after spending over 30 years working as a secretary and had embarked on her own comedy career.

"The reason for starting it was there were so many rubbish gigs out there," Jan said.

"There's so many places where there's bad lighting, the audience aren't engaged, and it's not very nice for the comedian.

"Secondly, it was also because I was fed up with going to London to perform all the time, paying £25 on the train to a bunch of venues where there might only be three people and a dog, so it was twofold really."

The club takes place several times a year at the Red Lion Hotel off New Road, with previous names on the bill including Matt Richardson, Tez Ilyas and Imran Yusuf.

"People tend to say they never realised there was a comedy club in Basingstoke," Jan added. "Although they do find us sometimes by accident.

"Jonny Awsum is our headline act. This is his third visit back because he's so popular. He's a guitar act and gets the whole audience singing funny songs, it's really great.

"Dan Evans is opening for us. He's a writer for the BBC and radio, so he's quite a big player too.

"The evening's are just lovely, it's a great atmosphere."

This is the last event for 2013, but Jarred Christmas is already scheduled to come to Laughterhouse on February 6, followed by Nathan Caton on March 6.

Tonight's show starts at 8.15pm, and tickets cost £14. Go to www.laughter-house.co.uk.

• Laughterhouse founder Jan Jack often performs herself during the comedy club evenings

QMC's Macbeth

EXTENDED Diploma students at Queen Mary's College present Shakespeare's famous tragedy Macbeth from Wednesday, taking place at Central Studio.

The students embrace all that is supernatural through live music, chorus and physical theatre work, with text from the repertoire of Renaissance drama that explores the idea of the witch.

Tickets cost £5.10 for a 7.30pm start. Go to www.centralstudio.co.uk or call 01256 418318 for more information.

We are champions

FOLK rock and soul band Danny and the Champions of the World come to The Railway, Winchester, on Tuesday, with support from The Dreaming Spires.

The show comes after the release of their fourth studio album 'Stay True' back in September, and will feature all the hits from their back catalogue. Go to www.railwaylive.co.uk for more details.

Classic night

A PROGRAMME of 18th century classic orchestral pieces is being performed at The Anvil this evening, in an evocative candle-lit style setting.

Pieces include the music of Mozart, Charpentier, Handel, Purcell, Pachelbel and Bach, performed by the Mozart Festival Orchestra in full 18th century costume.

It starts at 7.45pm, and tickets start from £19.50. Go to www.anvilarts.org.uk or call 01256 844244.

Carlamaria Jackson

THE Basingstoke Gallery is hosting a collection of artworks from Saturday, celebrating the female form by local digital artist Carlamaria Jackson.

In addition, Duncan Titmarsh will also be displaying his collection of custom made Lego models, including Danebury Hill fort, the Floating Bridge from Southampton and Portchester Castle.

Admission is free, and the gallery is open from Tuesdays to Saturdays.

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If you would like your event considered for publication please contact reporter Adam Flinn at adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk or telephone 01235 516933

Night before Christmas

By **Adam Flinn**
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

CHILDREN'S theatre comes to The Haymarket from this evening until December 8 with The Night Before Christmas, a production based on the popular festive poem.

It's Christmas Eve, and Emily is staring out of the window, excitedly waiting for the morning and to open all her presents.

Meanwhile in the corner, Eddie the mouse can't understand why only humans are allowed to celebrate Christmas, and sets out to ask Father Christmas and find out for himself.

Along the way he has to dodge the family cat, get directions from a cowardly toy soldier, and is helped out by the magical fairy at the top of the tree.

It is performed by children's theatre specialists Big Wooden Horse, who have brought other productions to Basingstoke, including 'Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!' and 'Aliens Love Underpants'.

The script for the show was written by Adam Bampton-Smith, who founded Big Wooden Horse in 2004 to create shows for young audiences across the UK and abroad.

He has adapted a number of children's books over the last decade, and is currently working on a one-man show called 'Oh No, Mr Sizzle!'.

Tickets cost £10, and a full list of show times and booking details is available at www.anvilarts.org.uk, or by calling the box office on 01256 844244.

• The Night Before Christmas, especially written as a children's production, begins its run at The Haymarket tonight

Gift and craft fair

TESTBOURNE Community School in Whitchurch is holding its gift and craft fair on Saturday, with a variety of items for sale in the run-up to Christmas.

There will also be festive music and carols by the Testbourne Flute Choir and Bella Voce, along with a visit from Whitchurch mayor John Clark and mayoress Rosemary Crumplin.

Admission is 50p for adults, and free for senior citizens and children. Call Hilary Bond on 01256 892350 with any enquiries.

Madeleine Peyroux

SINGER-SONGWRITER Madeleine Peyroux brings her latest show to The Anvil on Saturday evening, following the release of her latest album The Blue Room.

Her unique voice has brought her from the streets of Paris to mainstream recognition, with renditions of classics by the likes of Leonard Cohen and The Beatles. Go to www.anvilarts.org.uk for full details.

Story of Sinbad

THE story of Sinbad the Sailor is being staged by the Christchurch Players at Tadley Common Methodist Church from tomorrow, which they've chosen for this year's production.

Performing since 1977, the Christchurch Players have staged their own adaptations of Puss in Boots, Cinderella and Peter Pan in recent years, and return to Sinbad for the first time since 1991.

Tickets cost £6. For more details including start times, go to www.christchurchplayers.org.uk

Purple Zeppelin

DEEP Purple and Led Zeppelin tribute act Purple Zeppelin present their extensive two and a half hour show at Central Studio on Saturday, featuring over 30 classic songs.

Voted Best Tribute Act of 2012, the band pay tribute to two of the greatest bands of the era, complete with costume changes, for their latest show.

It starts at 8pm, and tickets cost £12. Go to www.centralstudio.co.uk or call 01256 418318 to book.

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30 Nov 2013, 11am
Central Studio Queen Mary's College
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www.centralstudio.co.uk

30 Nov 2013, 8pm
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30 Nov 2013, 1pm - 3pm
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30 Nov - 20 Dec 2013, 10am - 4:57pm
Willis Museum, The Basingstoke Gallery
THE GAZE
A collection of artworks celebrating the female form by local digital artist Carlamaria Jackson.
07876744861 www.carlamariajackson.com

30 Nov 2013, 11am - 4pm
Testbourne Community School, Whitchurch RG28 7JF
TESTBOURNE GIFT & CRAFT FAIR
We have over forty stalls offering a rich variety of gifts and handcrafted items for sale. Come and be entertained with festive music and carols by the Testbourne Flute Choir and 'Bella Voce' while you browse around the lovely stalls or sit enjoy some refreshments. Music to start at approximately 11.30am.
The Whitchurch Carnival Queen, Carnival Princess and their attendants will be attending the fair from 11am and the Whitchurch Mayor John Clark and Mayoress Rosemary Crumplin will be visiting the fair from 11.30.
Admission is 50p for adults, Senior Citizens and under 16 years free.All money raised by this fair will go towards the school's special projects for the benefit of all its pupils.
Please note that all the tables have been sold.
01256 892350

30 Nov, 10am - 2pm
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30 Nov 2013, 12pm - 4pm
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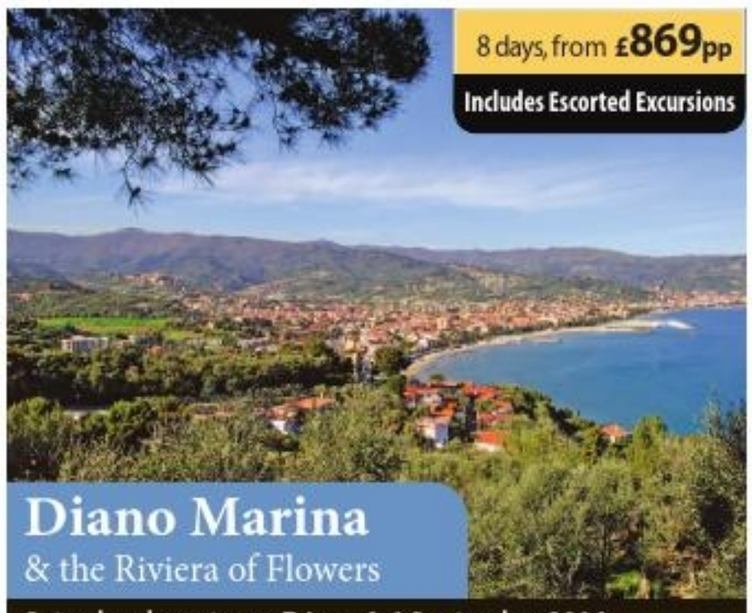
- A visit to Valletta including admission to The Malta Experience
- Includes a full day excursion; to The Three Cities; Cospicua, Senglea & Vittoriosa



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& the Riviera of Flowers

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  An upgrade to the 4 star Hotel Metropol, Diano Marina is offered, subject to availability, at a supplement.
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Sudoku

Place a number from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each 3x3 block, column, and full row includes each of the numbers from 1 to 9 only once. **EASY/MEDIUM/HARD**

	2		9	1		8	7	
8					3	1		
	4				2	9		5
1	6			3		2		
7			2		9			3
		4		7			9	8
3		2	8				6	
		5	6					9
	8	6		5	1		4	

	8						1	
	3	7		6		2	5	
		5	1		8	4		
			4		3			
	1						3	
			2		6			
		6	3		9	5		
	9	3		4		8	6	
	2						9	

9	4		8					
	1			4				
	3	2						
6		4	1			5		
3			9		8			2
		9			3	7		6
						3	1	
				7			6	
					5		9	7

Two speed crossword

Quick Clues Across

4 Reddishbrown (6)
8 Everlasting (7)
10 Firedog (7)
11 Unit of weight (5)
12 Wash lightly (5)
13 Savage (9)
16 Disparaged (9)
19 Digit (5)
20 Reverie (5)
22 Dignify (7)
23 Alighting (7)
24 Unforeseen (6)

Quick Clues Down

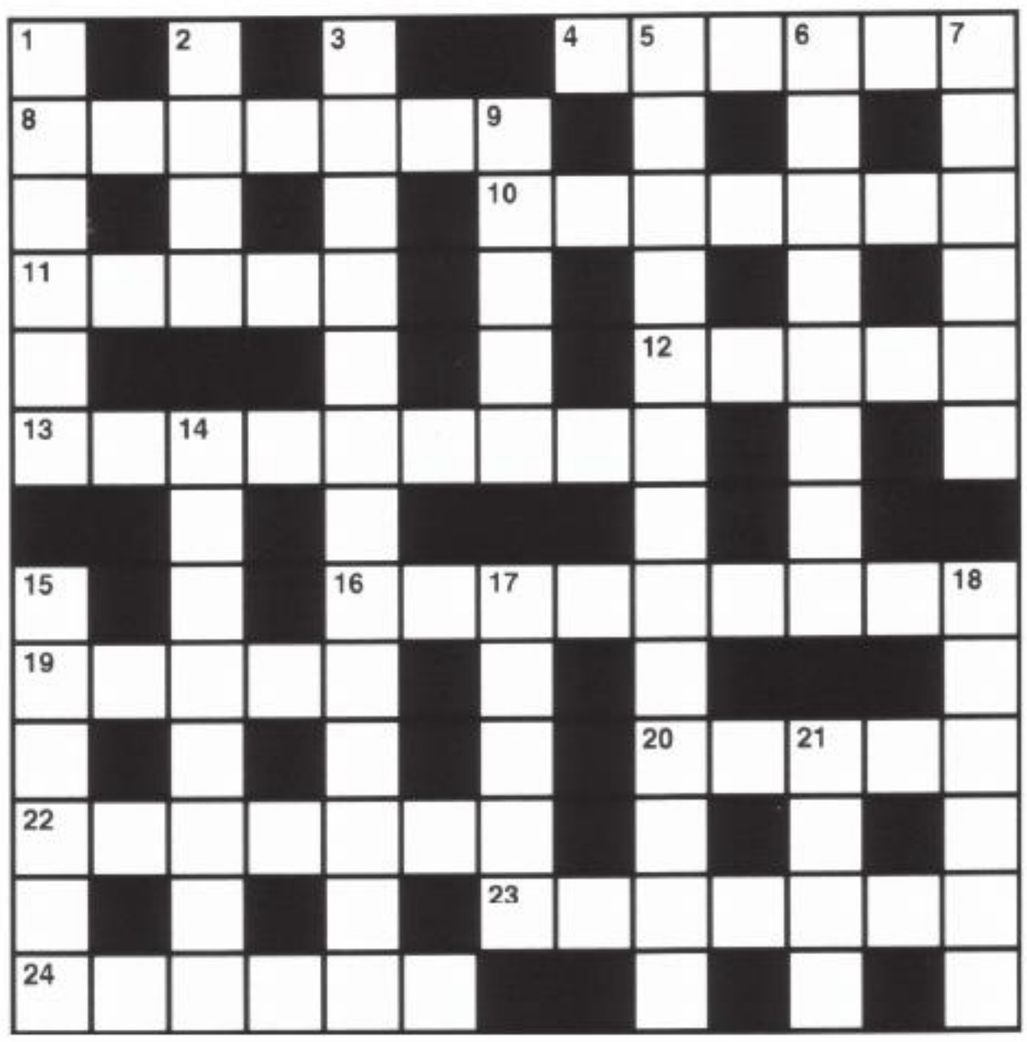
1 Begin a journey (3,3)
2 Edible seed (4)
3 Beyond description (13)
5 Mutual agreement (13)
6 Toughness (8)
7 Made taut (6)
9 Slow stately musical passage (5)
14 Sent back (8)
15 Greek city (6)
17 Discussion group (5)
18 Injury (6)
21 Narrative poem (4)

Cryptic Clues Across

4 Cheats at cards? (6)
8 But strong drink on Saturday and Sunday? (4,3)
10 All tear sideways (7)
11 Understand the subject on hand (5)
12 Where one cannot expect a warm welcome? (5)
13 A tailor's right to be upset about men's clothes (9)
16 An April display presumably (5,4)
19 The battleground is some land round the north (5)
20 One needs drive to make a go of it (5)
22 Last in bed got blown up (7)
23 Hang it! (7)
24 Songbirds? (6)

Cryptic Clues Down

1 Are they eaten by vegetarian cannibals? (6)
2 The way to embark (4)
3 Obviously he must be trained for the job (76)
5 Pharmacist who could have helped the three blind mice (6,7)
6 Sing joyfully in a US state (8)
7 Quickly surround gangster in the bar (6)
9 Heard in the alley by way of an excuse (5)
14 She upsets me in beads (8)
15 It sounds a risky caper (6)
17 Suitable instrument for playing watermusic (5)
18 A long speech read it out (6)
21 Came equal? Bound to! (4)



Scribble space

Last week's solutions

1	7	2	3	4	8	9	5	6
3	9	6	7	5	1	4	2	8
8	5	4	9	2	6	7	1	3
9	1	5	6	3	7	8	4	2
6	2	8	5	1	4	3	7	9
7	4	3	8	9	2	5	6	1
2	3	1	4	7	9	6	8	5
5	6	7	1	8	3	2	9	4
4	8	9	2	6	5	1	3	7

9	8	2	1	5	3	7	6	4
5	3	4	6	7	8	9	1	2
1	6	7	2	4	9	3	8	5
4	9	1	3	2	7	8	5	6
8	5	6	9	1	4	2	3	7
7	2	3	8	6	5	1	4	9
3	7	9	4	8	6	5	2	1
2	4	8	5	9	1	6	7	3
6	1	5	7	3	2	4	9	8

1	3	2	5	7	4	9	8	6
6	5	7	1	9	8	4	3	2
4	8	9	3	2	6	1	7	5
9	7	3	2	1	5	6	4	8
8	2	1	4	6	9	3	5	7
5	4	6	8	3	7	2	9	1
3	9	8	6	5	1	7	2	4
7	1	4	9	8	2	5	6	3
2	6	5	7	4	3	8	1	9

Quick Crossword

Across: 1 Caustic 1 Recur 8 Ache 9 Dumbbell, 10 Horse chestnut 13 Gnat 14 Ever 17 Interrogation 19 Eyesight 20 Exit 21 Tests 22 Schemer
Down: 2 Anchor 3 Stepson 4 Indicator 5 Robes 6 Cleaner 7 Related11 Energetic 12 Trident 13 Gathers 15 Extreme 16 Polite 18 Ruins

Cryptic Crossword

Across: 1 Refrain 5 Casts 8 Trip 9 Envisage 10 Proliferating 13 Herb 14 Urge 17 Feather duster 19 Rehearse 20 Upas 21 Surge 22 Adverse
Down: 2 Errors 3 Repulse 4 Ineffable 5 China 6 Seaside 7 Sleight 11 Roundhead 12 Informs 13 Heather 15 Gesture 16 Relays 18 Heave

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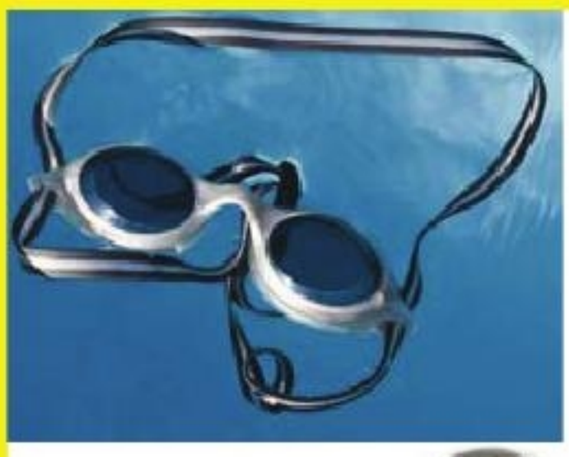

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WIN the new Merlin Complete Collection DVD box set!

Closing date: **Friday, December 13**

In September 2008, Saturday evenings on BBC saw the first airings of a new hit show.

In the telling of a story about a land of myth and a time of magic... the destiny of a great kingdom is seen rest on the shoulders of a young man. The series name? Merlin of course.

Since its launch, this ambitious BBC drama has grown to become one of the most loved and most watched programmes on television. The show's creators, Julian Murphy and Johnny Capp, pushed in equal measure both the plot development and the special effects, benchmarking the show's advanced CGI content against the best from Hollywood. It worked, with over 100 countries around the world licensing the show and huge DVD sales, together with an explosion in branded Merlin games, toys, a Merlin Magazine and a Merlin themed 'Dragon's Tower' at Warwick Castle

Swords, Sorcery and swashbuckling adventure ruled in the show. The Complete Collection brings together all five series on 27 DVDs, as we follow the young warlock Merlin (Colin Morgan), as he attempts to fulfil his destiny at the side of the once and future king; Arthur (Bradley James). Featuring a stellar cast including Angel Coulby, Katie McGrath, Anthony Head, Richard Wilson, and John Hurt as the voice of the Dragon, The Complete Collection tells the epic story of the golden age of Camelot. Featuring superb

action sequences and stunning CGI captivating the imagination as never-before-seen.

With an RRP of £59.49 and a running time 47hrs approx this is the ultimate Merlin fan package and although you will undoubtedly be able to find it at a lower price we have an even better deal as we have 3 sets to give away totally free.

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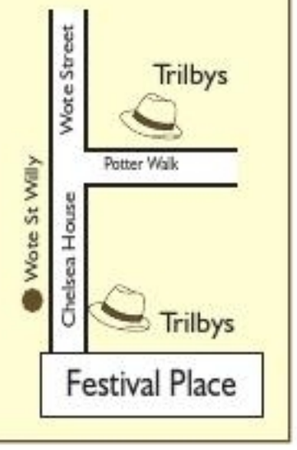

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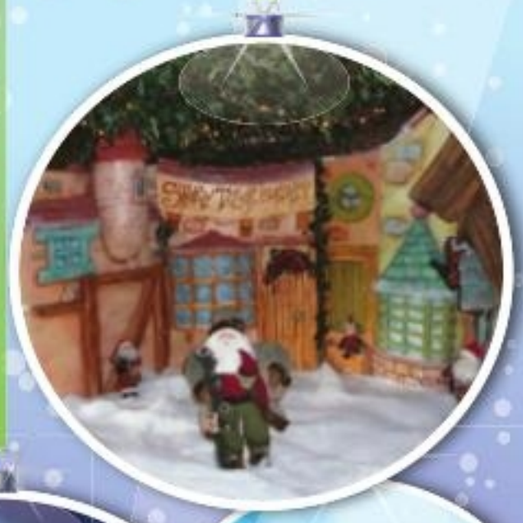

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Green fingers

Advertising Feature

Saving plants from the winter chill

• *(Main pic) credit PA Photo/JupiterImages Corporation. (Inset pic) dahlia flower, credit PA Photo/Thinkstockphotos.*

Tips on how to prepare your plants for the winter and protect them from frost

By **Hannah Stephenson**

I LOOKED out on my patio a few days ago to see a pelargonium I planted back in May coming into flower yet again, at a time when most of my summer pots have been emptied.

Despite a lot of rain, it's been a mild October, and this may lull many of us into a false sense of security about how long we leave it before offering our plants some protection from the winter chill.

As I live in a frost pocket, the pelargonium is going to come under cover soon. If you have pots of pelargoniums (bedding geraniums) which you want to enjoy next year, put them inside too, in a light, frost-free place such as a slightly heated greenhouse, a sheltered porch next to the house or an unheated spare room or conservatory, cutting them back to 10cm (4in). Don't expose them to warm central heating or they'll just wilt when you put them out next year.

Fuchsias, which lose their leaves entirely and spend winter looking like bare sticks, will need the same treatment. You'll hardly need to water them at all until growth resumes in spring, at which point you can repot them into John Innes No 2 potting compost and harden them off before placing them outside when the risk of frost has passed.

Marguerites (Argyranthemums) will also not stand any frost and are best dug up and potted, cut back by half and kept in a dry, cool, frost-free place that has sunlight through the winter, like a cool greenhouse. Water them sparingly to keep their roots dry until spring, when you can start to water them more frequently.

If you don't have heating in your greenhouse, insulating your more tender plants with bubble wrap can make a huge difference, especially if you buy the fixing clips which separate the glass from the bubble wrap, creating a thin pocket of insulating air between the glass and the wrap. Alternatively, you may have to venture out on really cold nights and cover your tender specimens with horticultural fleece to keep the winter chill at bay.

Pots of tender exotics such as citrus, palms and oleander which have graced your patio in summer will need to be moved back under cover, either into a cool conservatory or frost-free greenhouse, and will need to be watered sparingly throughout the winter. If your tender plants are simply too big to move, then wrapping them in hessian or horticultural fleece may be the answer.

Hopefully, a bit of TLC over the winter months will ensure that your plants are brought back to their full glory next summer.

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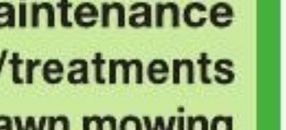

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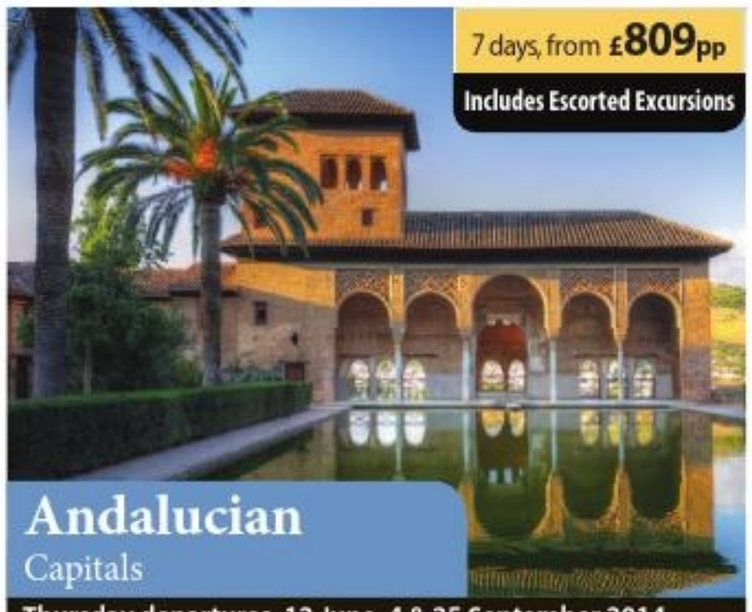

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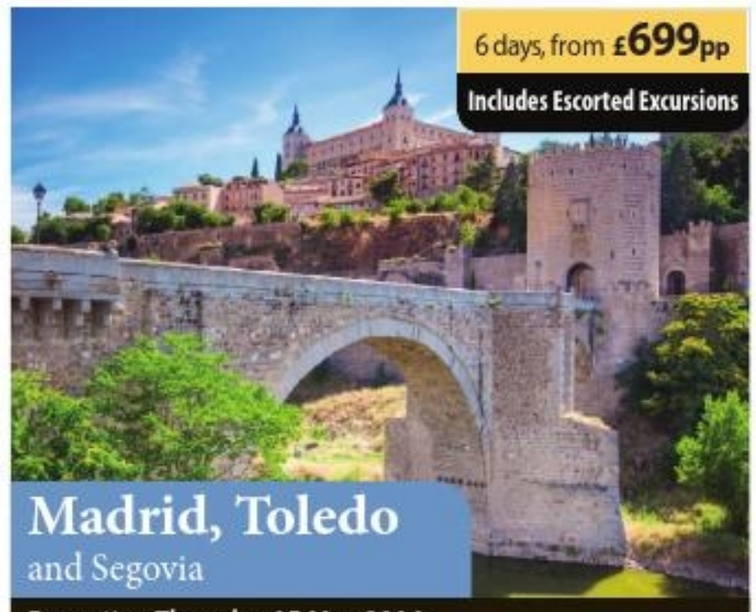

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Install a water softener and banish limescale!

Hard water is something we are all used to in the South, although most of us have got used to putting up with it, many do not realise that you can do something about it. It furs up our heating systems, causing breakdowns, makes it more expensive to heat our homes and damages our appliances.

The other problem with limescale is the constant cleaning of showerheads, shower screens, stainless steel sinks, the whole house can suffer where water is concerned. Limescale aggravates skin problems such as eczema and psoriasis.

With a water softener no limescale will get into the house, which means you will have to do less cleaning, stop buying limescale-related products, cut washing powder use by up to 75% and have less chance of large bills for potential future problems with your heating system and appliance breakdowns. If you were to purchase an ordinary softener you would have quite a large machine, which requires you to set clocks and lug around a 25kg bag of salt. The TwinTec S3 is different. It is small, requires no electricity and uses block salt (like two house bricks) instead of heavy bags.

Harvey Softeners has been manufacturing softeners in this area for more than 30 years. Kevin Goody (UK Water Softeners) is one of Harveys top TwinTec dealers and was voted number two in the country last year.

Why is Kevin so successful?

He puts it down to extensive marketing, having a great plumber with over 30 years of experience installing water softeners, good customer satisfaction and recommendations. Kevin has installed 4100 water softeners in homes in this area over the last eighteen years and arranges everything from initial survey to installation.

Get in touch

If you have an old water softener trade it in for something smaller and more efficient by calling Kevin Goody on: 01276 27924 without obligation. Email: kevingoody@uk-water-softeners.co.uk or visit our websites: www.uk-water-softeners.co.uk and www.watersoftenersuk.com

Kevin Goody also welcomes trade enquiries.

Improve your home

Advertising Feature

The wood life

Installing and maintaining wooden floorboards in your home

• *(Main pic) A beautiful finished flooring. Picture credit: PA Photo/thinkstockphotos. (left) Picture credit: PA Photo/Handout.*

By **Julia Gray**

IF YOU have period floorboards in your home, lucky you. If you don't, it doesn't mean you are doomed to be unlucky though - installing wooden flooring is easier than ever before.

Period floorboards are often hidden under carpet, tiles or lino, waiting to be discovered and restored to their former glory. This process usually means sanding with an industrial floor sander and edger, which is hard, hot and dusty work. Although more expensive, employing someone to sand them for you is, in my opinion, well worth it. They usually include the cost of the wood stain or varnish in the price and they'll also be able to do the job quicker than you can.

Original floorboards often have modern boards mixed in where repairs have been done over the years, and painting these boards can disguise them better than using a stain or varnish (although dark stains and varnishes can work well). You can, of course, replace the new boards with old ones, but this can be expensive and time-consuming, with no guarantee they'll match perfectly when sanded.

All that said, original floorboards are a fantastic feature in a period house or flat and there's nothing more satisfying than revealing and enjoying them after years under cover.

What if you don't have original wooden boards? Laminate flooring, which has a picture of wood printed onto boards, is an inexpensive and easy way to copy the look. It's not as fashionable as it once was though, so instead, why not opt for wooden flooring boards that click together, with no nails, screws or glue required? This system is widely available to buy, easy to fit, it won't break the bank, and is possible for both engineered and solid wood flooring.

Engineered wood boards have a top layer of real wood, with cheaper layers underneath. The thickness of the wood layer varies, so make sure you know how thick it is and how many times, if any, it can be sanded. A floor that can be sanded a few times is a good investment because it can take more wear and tear.

As lovely as solid wood is, engineered wood can be a more practical choice because the layers give it added strength and durability. Unlike solid wood, it shouldn't shrink and expand when exposed to moisture and changes in temperature and humidity.

Most wooden flooring comes finished, sealed and ready to fit, but you can get bare wood if you want to stain, varnish or paint it yourself, either conventional floorboards or, again, boards that click together for easy fitting.

With everything considered, getting the wooden floor of your dreams could be a bit of a battle - but the result will certainly be worth it.

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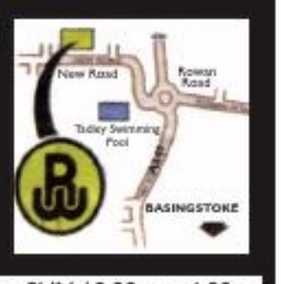

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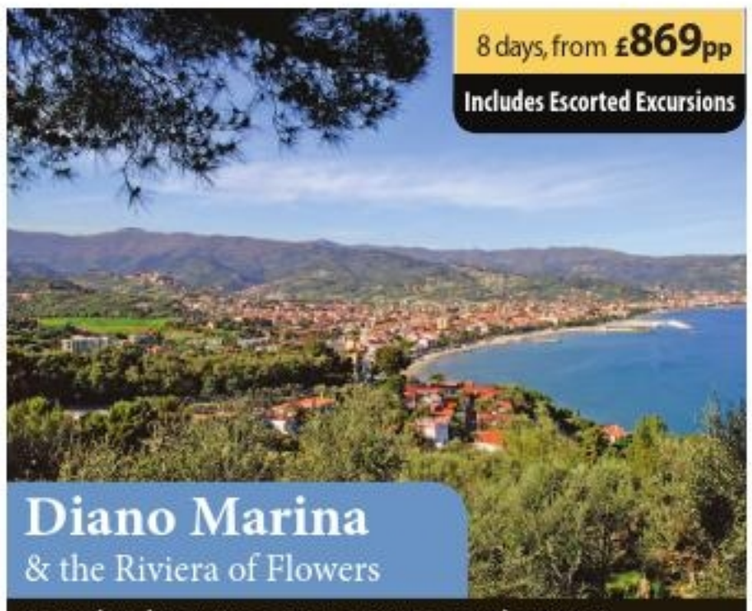

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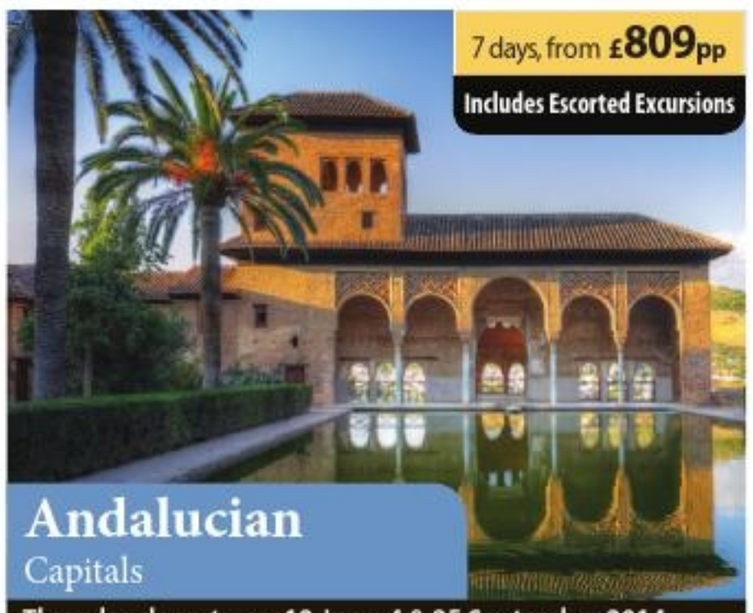

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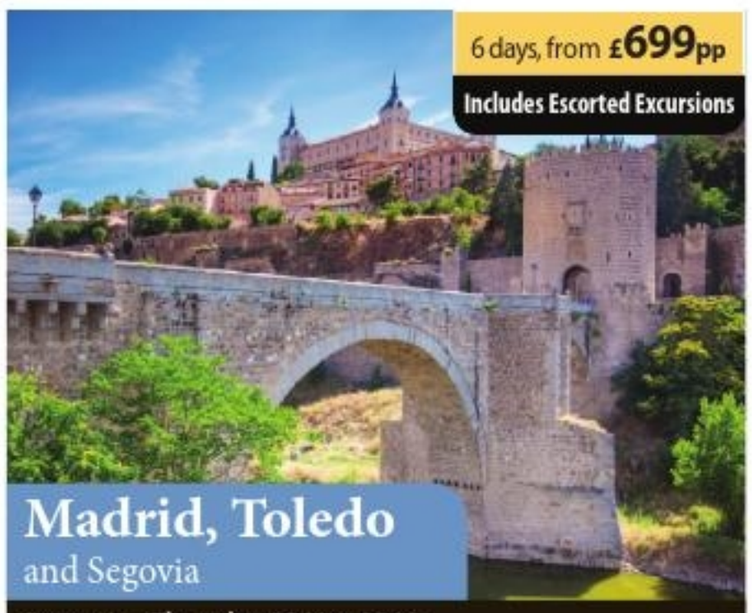

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REVIEW: SANDERO STEPWAY

By **Philip Shoulder**

@writeonmotoring

RENAULT'S subsidiary budget brand Dacia has been making waves this year, with the Duster 4x4 and Sandero supermini.

Dacia is the fastest growing automotive brand in Europe, selling 11,000 orders to date. The latest addition - the Sandero Stepway crossover - offers SUV style motoring from £7,995. With a 40mm increase in ride height over the Sandero, the Stepway gets a more rugged "go-anywhere" look, being kitted out with a front end and special body features, including front and rear skid plates, fog lamps, two-tone bumper, pronounced wheel arches, 16-inch Flexwheels rims, two-tone longitudinal roof bars, and exclusive Azurite blue paint. Powering the Stepway are two engines: a 0.9-litre TCe 90 petrol and 1.5 dCi 90 diesel.

The Sandero Stepway comes in two trim flavours; entry level Ambiance and more expensive Laureate. Standard kit on the Ambiance includes: daytime running lights, heated rear windscreen, a 12v socket, a CD radio, auxiliary connection, Bluetooth, USB input and electric front windows. Safety isn't scrimped on either, with front and side airbags, anti-lock brakes incorporating emergency brake assist, stability control, and ISOFIX child seat fixing points.

Once inside, you're treated with a spacious and airy cabin - although the 320-litre boot is rather shallow.

Admittedly it doesn't have the polished tactile feel of more expensive cars in this class, but the overall design is quite pleasant. The seats are comfortable enough, although there's no driver's side height adjustment. Larger drivers may also find the footwell a bit cramped, but at least there's somewhere to rest your left leg. Falling into the two-wheel drive crossover class, the Stepway does without clever traction control systems that you get on the considerably more expensive Fiat Panda Trekking and Peugeot 2008, but you do get mud and snow tyres.

At parking speeds the steering is usefully light, and combined with soft suspension means the Stepway can feel 'floaty' on faster A and B roads, although grip levels are surprisingly good.

Gear ratios are well-chosen and make the most of the relatively modest 89 bhp output, allowing the Stepway to gather pace well and cruise comfortably, despite the 1.5 litre diesel's gruffness. Stopping isn't a problem either, as the brakes are strong and positive.

Verdict:

This Sandero Stepway crossover brings the same qualities of great value and genuine capability that has already been seen in the hugely popular Duster 4x4.

• *Sandero Stepway*

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Bison hit for six up north as Phoenix romp to victory

Coombs bout could be on cards for Still

BASINGSTOKE fighter Darryl Still kept his hopes of a title fight alive after a points win against Jason McArdle last Saturday night.

The 32-year-old light-middleweight boxer defeated the Rochdale fighter in Southampton Guildhall.

After a cagey opening exchange, Still did not look in much trouble throughout the fight as he boxed his opponent from a central position in the ring.

And the bout marked Still's return to the ring since he defeated Cardiff boxer Gareth Piper in Winchester in June, which itself was his first tie in six months.

It was McArdle's first defeat as a professional fighter, after first defeating Mike Byles in September.

Still, who trains in Southampton, has recorded 12 wins from 17 professional fights, and hopes to secure a British Masters title bout against Mark Coombs.

Coombs is in action on Saturday, with an opponent yet to be announced for the Portsmouth fighter.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

BASINGSTOKE Bison were left licking their wounds after being on the wrong end of a 6-1 thumping by Manchester Phoenix on Sunday.

Only player-coach Doug Sheppard netted for the Herd, who are third in the EPL, four points off leaders Guildford Flames.

Manchester lie second on 34 points, two ahead of the Bison.

Sheppard's effort was converted a minute from time as a rampant Manchester turned out a dominant display on their home ice.

The weekend had started in excellent fashion for Sheppard's men, who saw off ninth-placed Peterborough Phantoms 6-0 at the Basingstoke Arena on Saturday.

Netminder Dean Skinns pulled off no fewer than 29 saves as he secured his second shutout in as many games.

Joe Rand netted the first for the Bison after nine minutes, smashing home after Joe Miller's effort had been saved.

Tomas Karpov, added a second before the end of the first period when he tipped in a Zach Sullivan point shot.

Aaron Connolly made it 3-0 on a powerplay eight minutes after the restart, and debutant Michael Wales, signed last week from Slough Jets, marked his first Bison appearance in the EPL with a goal.

Forward Wales received a crosspass puck from Andy Melachrino and smashed his effort past Thomas Murdy in the Peterborough net.

Karpov and Joe Baird completed the rout for the Bison, and Skinns pulled off 11 saves in the final period to maintain the shutout.

Meanwhile, the Bison have announced Tim Burrows will leave the Herd immediately due to other working commitments.

Burrows was a summer signing from Telford Tigers.

Sheppard said: "Tim has a job opportunity he could not turn down and I fully understand his decision.

"I would like to thank him for all he has done for the Bison and we wish him all the best for the future."

Miller is also set to leave the Bison in five weeks (on January 1), after being approached by another team.

Sheppard added: "I am sure Joe will do a professional job in his last six weeks and play as hard as he has for us in the opening 20 games of the season."

• Dean Skinns secured a shutout against Peterborough on Saturday, but had six goals hit past him in Manchester on Sunday evening (Picture by Grant King (5holephotography.co.uk))

Sport Bites

Narrow defeat

HARTLEY Wintney could not make it three games unbeaten as they fell to a 1-0 defeat at home to play-off chasers Westfield on Tuesday night.

While still having a few games in hand over their rivals, Hartley are 14th in the Combined Counties Premier.

Despite thumping Mole Valley 5-0 last week, they surrendered a 2-0 advantage to draw 2-2 with Wembley on Saturday.

The Row will be hoping to get back to winning ways with a trip to Farnham Town on Saturday.

Cup run goes on

JIM Macey's Whitchurch United pulled off another impressive result as they defeated Newport (IOW) in the Sydenhams Football League Cup on Tuesday.

The Jam Boys beat the team who lead the way in the Wessex Premier to progress to the semi-final.

In-form United have won 10 out of the last 13, and thumped Fawley 4-0 at Longmeadow on Saturday.

They travel to Porchester this weekend as they look to continue their march up the league.

Tadders draw

TADLEY Calleva battled to a 1-1 draw with Cowes Sports at the weekend.

Danny Dolan's side sit 10th in the Wessex League Division One with 15 points from 12 games.

Calleva travel to Hythe and Dibden on Saturday.

'Stoke continue improved form with victory at lowly Barking

BASINGSTOKE RFC made it five wins from six games as they moved up to seventh in the National League Three London table.

James Croker's side ran out comfortable 36-19 winners against basement side Barking on Saturday.

Scrum-half Jamie Fish touched down after 16 minutes to give 'Stoke the lead, but they were pegged back by the home side.

However, Adam Davies found his kicking boots, converting two penalties as well as Freddie Gleadowe's try as the visitors exerted their dominance.

Another Davies penalty and an Andy Hore try made it 28-5 in the second half.

Barking crossed for their second try, but Gavin Dampies made sure of the bonus point win with a breakaway score with just one minute remaining.

The Down Grange side now sit happily in mid-table – a far cry from the four defeats they encountered in their opening four games.

However, despite a resounding loss to East Grinstead in the opening weekend, 'Stoke have always acquitted themselves well after making the step up from London One South division last season.

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Inside: Bison hit for six up north as Phoenix romp to victory | Coombs bout could be on cards for Still | Tadders draw

WE'RE STILL REMAINING POSITIVE

Ebbsfleet end Dragons' winning run

BASINGSTOKE Town manager Jason Bristow said his team remain positive, despite seeing their winning run come to an end at Ebbsfleet on Saturday.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

The Dragons were edged out 1-0 by the Kent side, halting Bristow's side's five-match winning streak in all competitions.

Michael Thalassitis' header seven minutes after half-time proved to be the difference between the teams.

"It was a very good game in truth," said Bristow. "Two good sides playing football.

"We're disappointed not to have come away with a point, but they'll probably feel they did enough to win.

"We can be pleased with our efforts - we're just disappointed with the result.

"Even though we lost the game, Ebbsfleet are possibly the best side we have played this year, and we came very close to getting something from the game.

"The players are very disappointed, and rightly so, but at the same time, we're very positive about the performance, and we're looking to bounce back on Saturday.

"We've lost one in six – the mood around the squad, the staff and the club is very positive."

Despite the defeat, Basingstoke stay fourth in the Skrill South table, with their opponents moving up to fifth.

This weekend will see 'Stoke take on Havant and Waterlooville in the FA Trophy.

Before last weekend's game, Havant were the last side to inflict defeat on Basingstoke – a 4-1 hammering at West Leigh Park in mid-October.

And Bristow is keen to put to bed the disappointing record his side have in the competition in recent times, as well as exact some revenge.

"Historically, we've not done too well in this cup, and Saturday is something the players are relishing," said Bristow.

"If we get through Saturday, there's a good chance of us playing a conference Premier side, good opposition and a good test for us."

Shaun McAuley should be fit to return to the starting line-up, after missing the Ebbsfleet clash with a bout of flu.

Meanwhile, Basingstoke have announced they have agreed a deal with Championship side Reading to host the latter's under-21 side's development matches.

Basingstoke director Lee Atkins said: "It's going to provide the club with revenue, a lot of prestige in getting these fixtures on considering the calibre of teams that we will have visiting us.

"And it will hopefully be a great attraction for the football fans in the town."

Ebbsfleet United	1
Basingstoke Town	0

· Robbie Matthews rides a tackle from an Ebbsfleet defender (Picture by Les Chase)

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